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Shockheaded Peter: a junk opera. Costume Design.

J. Theresa Bush

Virginia Commonwealth University

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SHOCKHEADED PETER: A JUNK OPERA. COSTUME DESIGN.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
in Costume Design at Virginia Commonwealth University.

By

J. Theresa Bush
MFA in Costume Design
VCU
2013

Director: Toni-Leslie James
Head of Costumes, VCU Theatre

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Abstract

SHOCKHEADED PETER: A JUNK OPERA. COSTUME DESIGN.

By J. Theresa Bush, MFA

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Virginia Commonwealth University, 2013.

Major Director: Toni-Leslie James, Head of Costumes, VCU Theatre Department

My concept is rooted in the fairy tale land of the dark woods like so many other terrifying fairy tales from my youth. Shockheaded Peter, our boogeyman, is of the trees. The blood of the rotten children feeds the trees in this concept, for the marbles that fall from our children literally representing blood will roll down the rake, across tin gutters, and into a huge tin washbasin out of which grows our gnarly set tree, a gnarly knobby willow. Peter comes from this tree that is fed by the blood of children.

I set my costumes in the Regency period and located it in Germany, which gives my costumes the feeling of old fairy tales and their origins. The silhouettes lend themselves well to the progression of the story of each character.

My inspiration for this design was the artwork of Elizabeth McGrath, contemporary west-coast studio artist and sculptor. The nature of Elizabeth McGrath's seriously macabre sculptural installations drew me immediately to her as a source of inspiration for this design

INTRODUCTION

What I want to do here is show you how the roses grow from nothing at the beginning, just a script, some music, and a few directions, through inspiration and grind into the delicate sprigs of a concept that grow with force into the twisting gnarly vines of the fairy tale you are about to enjoy. This show was produced first in 1998 at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds, UK, and was already stylistically aggressive, what *The Independent* called "... a Gorgeously Gory Glory of a show!" The music was composed by Martyn Jacques of The Tiger Lilies who performed live as a vital component of the action of this junk opera, as they called it. The children were played by puppets, and the scenic elements were evocative of the early romantic theatre with two dimensional layered elements and an Appian sense of physical distortion.

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I set my costumes in the Regency period and located it in Germany, which gives my costumes the feeling of old fairy tales and their origins. The silhouettes lend themselves well to the progression of the story of each character.

My inspiration for this design was the artwork of Elizabeth McGrath, contemporary west-coast studio artist and sculptor. The nature of Elizabeth McGrath's seriously macabre sculptural installations drew me immediately to her as a source of inspiration for this design. The theme of child death, often infanticide, for the purpose of moral tutorship has a grotesque taboo; it is on

the fringe of what we as civilized peoples deem acceptable to explore. Yet, it is the subject of many theatrical endeavors spanning the history of our craft from Euripides' *Medea* to McDonough's *Pillowman*. The stories in this junk opera feature morality tales for children in which the children suffer the ultimate consequences for acts of youth like sucking thumbs, fidgeting, and playing with matches. The opera is based on the *Der ultimative Struwwelpeter oder Horror geschichten und grassliche bilder* or *The Ultimate Shockheaded Peter or Horrible Stories and Noisy Pictures*, a book written by Dr. Heinrich Hoffmann in 1845 as a behavioral guide for his unruly three-year-old child. It remains a popular and important children's book in German culture today and is extraordinary not only for its dark poetry but also for the folksy illustrations that accompany it.

BROAD ANALYSIS:

I will never forget the first time I read *Shockheaded Peter*, because I was feverishly anticipating what the challenges would be. What, for example, would be the next morality tale, the next type of naughty child, the next horrible gruesome death in a form ironically equal to the crime? As an artist you have to appreciate the folk lore of the period in which this piece was written, because it informs the eeriness of the piece to a modern audience. I see the period infused in my design. I set the clothing in the Regency period, the silhouettes that twang our gestalt into nursery rhymes and Grimm's Tales, the tail coats, empire-waisted gowns, puffy capped sleeves on menswear and women's wear, bonnets, breeches, riding boots. However, I also included some elements of the late Victorian period in which the poetry was written. Many of my adult characters are formally Regency, but my children's looks are also influenced by the socks, breeches, and ankle boots of the Victorian children often found in old daguerreotypes.

The script is comprised of Dr. Hoffmann's poetry in English, so my approach to it was to listen to the sound track during my readings of the poetry. This play is inseparable from its music, as opera is. The telling of each horrible tale is punctuated by instrumental and vocal manifestations of the horror therein; The Tiger Lilies bring a dirty and frightening mood to the poetry.

It was important to me and also one of the challenges of the show to design costumes for the band. I think it was optional to design clothes for The Tiger Lilies as they are or to design a completely new band; I chose the later. My band plays junkyard zydeco instruments like those a junk band would play: a wash basin for a stand-up base, an antique wash-board, and a junk yard accordion equipped with old cow and bicycle bells and a customized license plate reading, "3-SHP-9", a subtle indicator of their allegiance to **Shockheaded Peter**. I want my band to be close

in the world of the play to Shockheaded Peter; I want them to be from the woods, to have hooves and tails and snarling wolfish faces. Much like my parental adults have rustic wooden elements like pipes and large wooden utensils, the band members who are more sinister even than the conniving parents are adorned with overtly woodsy elements. I will elaborate on the character designs for the band members later in this examination.

RESEARCH

Philippe Otto Rung: Regency Period, German flavor, Color Palette

I collected my period research from the paintings of Philip Otto Runge, a German painter who produced during the early nineteenth century. The Regency period is one depicted in the world of Jane Austen and Hans Christian Anderson, fanciful imagery from the literature of our youth. Women's gowns were characterized mostly by their high waists sitting just under the bust know as the Empire Waist. It was a time of bonnets and fichus, gloves and parasols. Women were still in corsets and petticoats, and aprons were still necessities for working women. Menswear was characterized by frock coats, cutaways, tailcoats, breeches or stirrup pants, tops and other hats. Men and women generally dressed more formally in everyday situations than we do today. Waistcoats and jabots were still worn with high starched collars and tight sleeve cuffs. Runge's paintings depict these silhouettes on adults and children, which gives his work truly perfect application in the context of this opera.

German flavor was also an aspect of Runge's work that spoke to me, because *Shockheaded Peter* is based on a German book of fairy tales. I wanted to maintain the integrity of the German aspect of this show.

Philip Otto Runge developed his own color theory. He believed that there were only three colors: red, yellow, and blue. By mixing variations of these three with the addition of black or white, Runge compiled a color sphere with black and white at each polar end and each graded color variation expanding around the sphere from the equatorial zone. The interior mass of the sphere is also comprised of color combinations; Runge included an illustration of a cross section of the sphere in his publications pictured below. This model is not far from the color wheel we

would find at the local art supply store. It makes a special relationship between the colors on a physical chart that helps us to understand what happens when we use colors together.

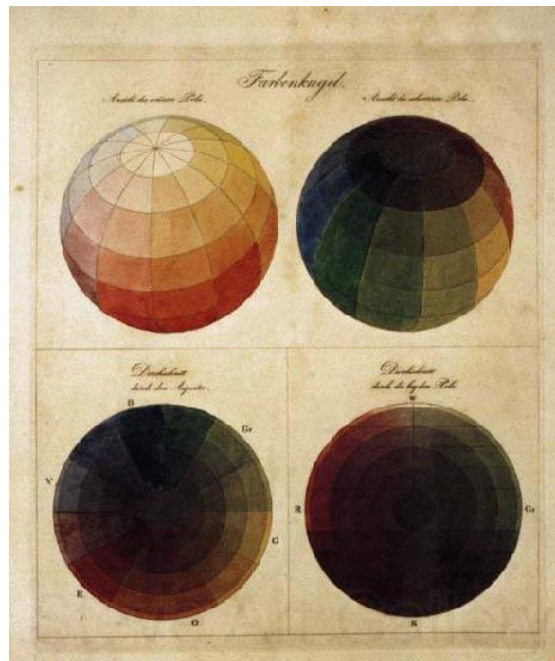


Figure 1: Philippe Otto Runge's Color Sphere

Runge published his work on the color sphere with other educated articles about the rules of color harmony and color in nature. It is this color in nature that interests my work with *Shockheaded Peter*. Having found Runge's work attractive initially because of the research value of the period garments worn by his models, his color palette was immediately attractive to me, as well. Having discovered the above illustration, I was instantly visited by the desire to use Runge's color palette as a strong reference point for my own. His paintings were evocative to me of outdoor mischief in the pastoral setting, of children running and squealing out of doors wearing their lacey collars and button front breeches. His subjects look to me to be the characters out of Grimm's adventure stories for children, and the color palettes of his paintings are very tight. Ultimately, I decided to use Runge's color sphere illustration as my color palette for *Shockheaded Peter* and to keep it very tight, never veering too far off of or into the sphere.



Figure 2: Swatches in the Color Palette

Above are my collected swatches for this show. I knew that I would be using many wools, leathers, embroidered cotton, linens, and velvets, as build fabrics for my menswear frock coats, vests, and breeches, and many cotton eyelets and laces for my women's wear and fur for my animal puppets. While swatching each of these types of fabric, I chose colors exclusively within my portion of the color sphere. Illustrated above, I organized my swatches according to color gradient; if I knew I wanted an orange painted velour, I would steer through the reds into the orange colors and choose one of the many heavier fabric swatches there. This is the first project on which I have swatched in this manner. Typically, I seek out the fabrics that I want for each garment or character and try to reconcile the color story in the end, filling in holes and

replacing swatches as I go. This time, however, I had a limited resource pool, but it represented a strong, cohesive color story. I am very satisfied with the fabric types that I chose and their appropriateness for each garment being built and for the reproduction of the period of the show, and I am very pleased with the color story, as well.

If anything, I might say that I wish the costumes had more texture. I find the use of solid-colored cotton velvet on solid-colored leather with a solid wool overture a bit visually bland, so I did throw in some printed silks for silly things like Cruel Frederick's breeches. The tie silk that I chose would not normally be applied to a pair of breeches, but I like the texture of them and I like the color story with his checked wool frock coat. So, I did it. We will see.

Much of my children's and monsters fabrics deviate from the manifesto of period appropriate fabrics above. For instance, Tall Agrippa's extra long tail coat is made of jute burlap with appliquéd one-and-one-half-inch hemp circles across the entire surface of it and his extended-waist fall-front breeches are made of a hemp woven netting with a pop of navy blue color behind it in the form of a lining. The idea is to depict a monster-ness, a woodiness, an otherness or alienation from the normal characters in the opera.

Research

Elizabeth McGrath: Mood, Texture, Details, Use of Scenic Elements

Otherness brings me back around to Elizabeth McGrath, that macabre queen of sculptural relief. Her work put the stink into my designs. McGrath's subject matter and presentation are disgusting, grotesque, evocative of a world gone wrong, and beautiful; they are beautiful. In my favorite of her shadow box sculptures called "Milk Blood" McGrath depicts a demented nurse, nude but for a collar and envelope hat, huge red nipples, and syringes on a bandolier cutting across her breasts while wearing a crinoline heavy metal cage around her naked, legless bottom. Her eyes are huge yellow orbs painted around with pink like a junky's eyes, red lips like a vampire. She is holding an ornate elephant rifle. A horrid monkey-like creature clutches at the cage from inside of it. She stands in a red velvet-looking shadow box interior with tiny pictures mounted behind her from floor to ceiling. The frame of the shadow box is equally as designed, ornate, and breathtaking as the sculpture within. I wanted from the beginning of the process to evoke the presentational aesthetic of McGrath's sculpture. This figure in a shadow box is infused with metaphors and psychological stigma and the mode by which she is being displayed is like a fairy tale book's illustration come to dimensional life. The painted ribbon on the frame reads the following: "Nemo liber est qui corpori scruiat," "No one is free who is a slave to his body."



Figure 3: *Milk Blood* by Elizabeth McGrath

I discovered McGrath in a publication entitled *Everything That Creeps* that features a variety of her exhibitions. The above installment, “Milk Blood” is a part of a series entitled *Villains and Vernon of Dubious Nature*.

To me, McGrath’s work embodies the effective features that I wanted to include in *Shockheaded Peter*: a baffling sense of the eerie mystery of what is before your eyes; you can see the images but your brain does not really understand until it has absorbed all of the nuances, the minutia of the design. It is like a slow burn effect. McGrath’s detail work is astounding, as well. The size of her installments at about eighteen-twenty inches each makes her sculptures about the size of my renderings at about ten inches. The very tiny details that she includes in the bodies and garments and props of these weird creatures are incredible. One villain of dubious

nature entitled “Johnny Spanish: el gato con producto” is a wicked feline hustler wearing a gangster hat, collar, tie, and French cuffs despite his not wearing a shirt and instead being covered thoroughly with coarse nappy fur. This cat has peeled open his chest cavity revealing ribs and the inner lining of his skin as though it were a trench coat peddler’s mall. Items with price tags include an eyeball for \$15, a kidney for \$20, and intestines for \$25. He points to the wares with a sharpened bone. These little organs are perfect and perfectly gruesome, though they are likely one quarter of an inch in size.



Figure 4: *Johnny Spanish: el gato con producto* by Elizabeth McGrath

She gives us overwhelming detail compiled, distilled, and presented in a cohesive and beautiful way that, above all else, tells the story of each character more effectively than words ever could.

I took from McGrath ultimately a tone for my design plates, an overall mood for the aesthetics of the show, and an emphasis on detail work that I found necessary to tell the complete stories of each of my characters.

Concept Development: Woods, Trees, Autumnal Sacrifice

My concept derived from woods, trees, and autumnal sacrifice. Shockheaded Peter is the ultimate manifestation of death in the opera; he appears to take the dead children off into the woods. He is a malevolent tree spirit, essentially; his headdress is based on a gnarly knobby willow tree, his pants the trunk, his fingers the long-reaching tendril branches grasping for the children's lives, urging them to give in to their instincts to be childish and to die. So, I established a story about the woods. Shockheaded Peter is death in the woods.

The adults in the tale more often than not end up doing, foretelling, or reporting harm done to the children. Conrad's mother, for instance, and the Great Tall Tailor are adults who bring a terrible bloody death to Conrad the boy because he sucked his thumbs. The Green-coat Hunter Man and the Hunter's Wife are interesting in that they seem like the innocent parties of *The Story of the Man That Went Out Shooting*, but they are executed by the Hare it would seem because of their transgressions against small furry creatures. Even my adult band members have a sinister kinship to the boogeyman. I have set up an aesthetic division between the adults and the children of the opera by giving the adults' costumes some overt wooded elements: leaves, sharp sticks and twigs, or wooden props. Of course, some of my children have wooden props, as well. See Augustus who perishes of starvation because he will not eat his twig soup or William "...in jacket trim who brought his wooden hoop with him." Wood is sinister and denotes a closeness to Shockheaded Peter, a closeness to death.

The costumes that I designed for the band are even more evocative of the woods. In my mind, the band members are Shockheaded Peter's henchmen, allied with him and also coming from the trees. Their accoutrements and hand props are more overtly made of trees and junk than all others, they have tails and pointy ears and cloven feet. They are clearly not human,

though they wear the clothes of men. As the band members are present always onstage and directly involved in the action of the show, their beastliness will aid in differentiating them from the parents and children of the stories and creating a visual conflict on the palette of the stage.

Concept Development: Special Costume Design Challenges

This show design was an assignment, a paper project given me by my mentor, Toni-Leslie James, and with it she gave some special challenges. In a show that requires blood, fire, and child death, we were issued the challenge not to use liquid blood, or real fire, or puppets instead of children. This is in keeping with the nature of the original production which used beautiful creative conventions; for instance, when Harriet sets herself on fire, the original production had her petticoat constructed out of red organza and chiffon that moved beautifully when she danced her skirt up around her waist and looked convincingly and excitingly like flames. Conrad Suck-a-Thumb was played by a puppet, and the Great Tall Tailor actually cut the puppet's fingers off of his puppet hands, something that we could obviously not do with a child actor.

All actors must be real people, though we were given a choice whether or not to cast child actors as our child protagonists. This option arrested me for a time; in my opinion, a choice to cast children or not informs the content and perception of the play. Ultimately, I chose to cast children; the horror of infanticide seems more grotesque if we can portray it with real innocent-looking, sweetly-dressed fairy tales girls and boys. Another choice would be to cast adults as the child characters, and, as in so much children's theatre, we would have charming young adults play our Hansel and Gretel. My favorite children's theatre is that done with child actors; I think there is an innocent truth in the children's performances. Their physicality is not learned or adopted; it seems closer to truth to cast children in these roles. It is certainly more chilling to see them all die.

My solution to the special challenges came with the development of scenic and lighting elements for the show. Normally, I do not conceive the other sceneographic elements of a show,

but my vision for this opera required a total conceptual collaboration among costumes, scenic, lighting, and sound.

In response to the need for blood, and lots of blood, without the use of stage blood I propose the use of translucent red marbles. When a child is brutalized, they produce instead of blood from their wounds, a cascade of heavy red marbles that fall to the floor creating sound and movement and chaos. CLACK! Clack, clack, clack. CLACK! CLACK! The floor would be treated in a way as to support the sound of the marbles falling, but I will elaborate more on the scenic elements further along.

These marbles have a strategic hiding plan for all of my doomed children's costumes. Cruel Frederick will have them covering his leg mounted on a stocking to depict his dog-bitten leg. Conrad Suck-a-Thumb will have marbles in plastic tubing up his sleeves and giant red rubber thumbs on his hands. When the Great Tall Tailor snips off his thumbs with large wooden gardening shears, Conrad will loose the marbles from his shirtsleeves and it will evoke suddenly and horribly trickles of blood rushing from his wrists. The sound, I hope, will enhance the pain of watching Conrad bleed to death, somehow making it more unsettling. The Bully Boys have one of my favorite applications of this marble idea; they have gauzy headdresses that look like bandages with black strips of electrical tape making Xs over their eyes and mouths. The headdresses are hollow at the top and have a depression large enough to fill with marbles. With any luck they may sparkle and shine like exposed viscera atop the bandaged, bashed-in heads. When the boys slump over to die, the marbles will fall from their headdresses like blood and brain pouring from their heads. I think the movement applications are limitless and exciting! It is always a rewarding experience when my costumes become an integrated part of the action of a

show, when close collaboration is successful in producing something fantastic. These blood marbles would be an important part of rehearsal from early on in the process.

Concept Development: Scenic Design

The scenic design for the show relates directly to the effectiveness of the marbles in their sound application, travel across the stage floor, and eventual destination. I want my set to be double-raked so that the angle of the floor is such that upstage right is the highest point of the raked stage floor deck and downstage left is the lowest point. The rake would not need to be extreme. I want my floor to be treated in a way that will amplify or exaggerate the sounds of falling marbles CLACK!ing of the surface and rolling down the rake to the lowest stage left corner. This will make some lovely movement as the audience's eyes follow the trail of blood all the way down stage left and into an oversized shiny tin gutter that runs the full length of the stage in front of and below the deck and directs the marbles like a big noisy track.

At the bottom of the track on the floor will be an oversized aged tin washbasin where the marbles will collect. Imagine Conrad has his thumbs snipped off at a musical crescendo and the marbles fall from his tiny wrists onto the stage floor, roll down to stage left, hit the gutter, roll down to stage right, and clang into a huge rusty tin wash basin. The blood of the children collects in this pool, this wash basin. Out of the giant wash tub full of marbles grows a huge gnarly knobby willow tree. It is as if the tree survives on the blood of the dying children. It is from this tree that Shockheaded Peter enters each scene. Thus, death feeds death, the boogeyman is fed by the death of naughty girls and boys.

Johnny Head-in-Air has one of the less-exciting deaths in the script; as a consequence of walking about with his face looking upward at the sky, Johnny walks into a river and drowns. I would like Johnny to be able to walk right off of the down stage right corner and directly into the giant wash basin of blood marbles. This would, I imagine, entail a great deal of trouble shooting,

safety precautions, and rehearsal, but I think it will be tremendously effective in supporting the concept. Of this death I am particularly fond.

Another scenic element that is intrinsically tied to the effectiveness of the costume concept is the fire effect when Harriet lights herself on fire. In the poem, Harriet lights a match which catches her apron string and sets her ablaze. As aforementioned, the original production had Harriet wearing a petticoat made of brightly colored moveable layers of lightweight fabric that looked like puppet flames engulfing her as she pulled her skirt up over her body. In my design, Harriet's dress would be a breakaway pinafore rigged at the hem with visible fly lines to the grid above. I have even sometimes hoped that there could be a huge scenic marionette handle with visible fly lines attached to it that connect functionally to Harriet's skirt and perhaps aesthetically to her head and arms, as well. There could even be the big nasty hand of Shockheaded Peter guiding Harriet's movements. The idea is that when Harriet catches flame, the lights go dark and we hear the falling of marbles and the cracking of twigs, her pinafore dress breaks away over her head to make her look like a pillar, and we get a hot light special that makes her look like a pillar of flames. When the lights return, Harriet will be in the same position onstage and her dress will have flown out to reveal only her pre-distressed bloomers, chemise, and burnt skin. I want her to look like a burnt leaf.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS: Teasing Out Ways to Develop Character within the Framework of the Concept in Order to Elevate the Storytelling

Shockheaded Peter is the boogeyman; he is death in the woods. He is a tree. In a concept driven by the woodland fairy tale theme, this title character is the penultimate manifestation of the danger in the woods. My initial notes for the character included the following: “Green hair—big wig. Wig of trees, wood, twigs—some leaves in autumn colors. Long nails like dead twigs. Carries a pouch of marbles.” Shockheaded Peter’s poem occurs at the end of the book of poetry and his song is last to play in the score. It seems like an epitaph to dead children everywhere.

*Just look at him! There he stands,
With his nasty hair and hands.
See! His nails are never cut;
They are grimed as black as soot; And the slober, I declare,
Never once had combed his hair;
Anything to me is sweeter
Than to see Shock-headed Peter*



Figure 5: Shockheaded Peter from the Original Illustration by Heinrich Hoffmann

The above image is the illustration of Shockheaded Peter that accompanied Hoffmann's original publication, and it has been in the years since an enduring image of the character. In the original production, the puppet of Shockheaded Peter closely resembled this illustration. I knew that I wanted to reinvent the character visually and stylistically but maintain the familiar aspects of the initial illustration: the green shocked hair and long fingernails. Having found the image below in my search for unruly wigs, I considered what it would be to create a tree wig.



Figure 6: Tree Wig Inspiration Image

If I could manage to produce a wig that resembled a tree, what tree would best represent Shockheaded Peter? If I were walking through Dante's Inferno and I came to the Wood of the Suicides, what types of tress would I find those damned souls to inhabit? The following image is that of a knobby willow:



Figure 7: Knobby Willow

This tree embodies the sort of twisted, gnarled heaviness required for a truly evil character. I want Peter to be frightening, naked but inhuman. I developed this black and white sketch depicting a large headdress and lengthy prosthetic fingers.



Figure 8: Shockheaded Peter Black and White Sketch

The building material of Peter's wig and gloves would have to be light enough that his neck and wrists can support their weight and that they do not become unwieldy. Therefore, I would build them out of thermoplastic Varaform mesh. It is versatile enough to be manipulated into the branches of the knobby willow and easily reshapable with steam. Varaform adheres to itself flawlessly, so the joints where twigs branch off from one another would be firm. Varaform is also extremely light weight which makes it an excellent resource for large-scale theatrical masks. This headdress would have to be braced down the actor's back, over his head, and

around his shoulders, perhaps even onto his chest. My challenge here would be to make the piece wearable and keep movement uninhibited. The prosthetic fingers would fit onto each one of the actor's fingers but would be braced firmly around the actor's forearm for weight support. This arm bracing would be masked by burlap fingerless arm warmers tied at the top by twine or scraps of Peter's pants fabric. The freedom of my actor to move in this costume is critically important to its success. Therefore, the prosthetic hands must be light enough that each finger move independently and the forearm can support most of the weight.

Regarding fabrics, I wanted to keep Shockheaded Peter's fabrications limited to natural fibers and stay true to my tight Runge-inspired color palette, so I found a loosely-woven wool with a burlap quality woven with three colors: tan, brown, and orange. I am very pleased with the pants to ground the otherwise naked body with dark color and have a rough surface texture. Pants like the bark of a tree.

The final touches of this look are the real money makers. Shockheaded Peter's marble pouch would be made of a heavy linen and have a drawstring, and it would be filled with red marbles. I want him to be able to jangle the pouch if he so desires, to flaunt his collection of child blood like it is his prized possession, potentially his only possession. Finally, Peter's body makeup would have to be incorporated into the design. His body would be powdered to be pale on the exposed legs, arms, chest, and bald head, his eyes blackened with tinted contact lenses, and his lips, nostrils, and toenails darkened like he is a rotting corpse or a victim of disease. He is my boogeyman, and I want him to scare every last one of us.



Figure 9: Shockheaded Peter Rendering

Cruel Frederick was an easy character to design, because all of his major descriptors in the poem are easily translatable into costume props to illustrate his wickedness. He tears the wings off of flies, mutilated kittens, breaks chairs, and beats his Mary. He will also have a whip by which he beats poor Tray. The child depicted in the poem below is a monster:

Cruel Frederick

*Here is Cruel Frederick, see!
A horrid wicked boy was he;
He caught the flies; poor little things,
And then tore off their tiny wings,
He killed the birds, and broke their chairs,
And threw the kittens down the stairs;
And oh! far worse than all beside;
He beat his Mary, till she cried.*

*The trough was full, and faithful Tray
Came out to drink one sultry day;
He wagged his tail, and wet his lip,
When Cruel Fred snatched up a whip,
And whipped poor Tray till he was sore
And kicked and whipped him more and more;
At this, good Tray grew very red,
And growled, and bit him till he bled;
Then you should only have been by,
To see how Fred did scream and cry!*

*So Frederick had to go to bed:
His leg was very sore and red!
The Doctor came, and shook his head,
Fred, Fred, Fred – he was dead.*

I imagine Frederick as a tiny little punk, a small boy with a big horrible family life who is twit and a bully. He carries his wicked deeds around with him. For instance, he has horse flies attached to wires trying fruitlessly to escape his reach; he has a dead kitten hanging from his whip. The clothes of this child are high and tight. Frederick is dressed like a little gentleman: wool frock, silk breeches, striped waistcoat, and lacey sleeve cuffs.



Figure 10: Regency Menswear High Collar Frock Coat c. 1800-1810

Despite his fine clothes, he is a bitter and very angry little boy. To denote his fatal wound, I have the red marbles attached to a stocking on his right leg. He would wear leather gators over the wound until he is bitten, at which point he would remove the gator and reveal the bloody mess beneath. Ideally, I would stow some spare marbles in a pocket somewhere so that the audience could get our first taste of the traveling blood technique.



Figure 11: Cruel Frederick Black and White Sketch



Figure 12: Cruel Frederick Rendering

As for our Doctor, the most important aspect of the doctor to me was that he appears to have a huge wagging head, so that when “...the doctor came and shook his head...” to pronounce Fred dead, he can really bobble that thing around. To achieve this, I gave him a tall and tight collar, tight fitting shoulders and chest in his frock and waistcoat, a tiny top hat, and small eyeglasses. The hope is that by surrounding his head with smallness, it will make it look disproportionately larger. By giving him a wildly voluminous nineteenth century hair style, we can emphasize the head size even more.



Figure 13: Research Image for Crazy 19th Century Doctor Character

I also want the doctor to have all manner of antique medical equipment on his person and in his beautiful medical bag, research image below.



Figure 14: Antique Medical Bag

In my black and white drawing of the Doctor, I toyed with the idea of attaching an old clamp or pick to his top hat to increase the prevalence of eerie things on his person, but the clamp was better left off in the end of things.



Figure 15: Doctor Black and White Sketch

It is worth mentioning here that the doctor's fabrics, like many of the fabrics chosen for this show, were carefully compiled to work well together for the character. I am particularly fond of the Doctor's combination of striped pants, embroidered cotton vest, and white gauze with large, mustard-yellow polka dots for his shirt and jabot. I threw some green herringbone wool in there for the frock and popped some yellow dyed leather for details on his medical equipment bandolier.



Figure 16: Doctor Rendering

The Dreadful Story of Harriet and the Matches was an exciting one to design, because it requires a fire trick and cat costumes. As I described above, Harriet's fire trick is one of the special challenges of this show. My plan for effectively executing Harriet's combustion is to use lights, sound, and a flyaway pinafore to give the impression of a blaze.

The Dreadful Story of Harriet and the Matches

*It almost makes me cry to tell
What foolish Harriet befell.
Mamma and Nurse went out one day
And left her all alone at play.
Now, on the table close at hand,
A box of matches chanced to stand;
And kind Mamma and Nurse had told her,
That, if she touched them, they would scold her.
But Harriet said: "Oh, what a pity!
For when they burn, it is so pretty;
They crackle so, and spit, and flame:
Mamma, too, often does the same."*

*The pussy-cats heard this,
And they began to hiss,
And stretch their claws,
And raise their paws;
"Me-ow," they said, "me-ow, me-o,
You'll burn to death, if you do so."*

*But Harriet would not take advice:
She lit a match, it was so nice!
It crackled so, it burned so clear—
Exactly like the picture here.
She jumped for joy and ran about
And was too pleased to put it out.*

*The pussy-cats saw this
And said, "Oh, naughty, naughty, naughty Miss!"
And stretched their claws,
And raised their paws:
"Tis very, very wrong, you know,
Me-ow, me-o, me-ow, me-o,
You will be burnt, if you do so."*

And see! Oh, what dreadful thing!

*The fire has caught her apron-string;
She burns all over everywhere,
She burns her nose and her arms and her hair...
Till she's got nothing left to lose,
Except her little scarlet shoes;
And only these, only these are found
Amongst her ashes on the ground.*

*Miaow, miaoh, miaow, miaoh,
She's burned to death, we told her so.*

*Well, the pussy cats, they sat beside
Those steaming ashes and they cried:
Miaow, miaoh, miaow, miaoh,
She's burned to death, we told her so.*

The effect of lighting poor Harriet on fire by removing her outer layer and exposing a burnt inner layer is reliant upon properly distressing her bloomers and chemise and effectively making up her skin. The research image below depicts the exact make-up application that I want on Harriet's arms, hands, neck, and face.



Figure 17: Burn Victim, Image Extracted from *History of Nuclear Weapons*

The burns on this person are textural would be visually impactful onstage. They also give me a chilling sense of the human realness of this character and the consequences that she has suffered for playing with matches.

Harriet's silhouette is sweet, a darling little baby doll dress with a lacy pinafore apron, a big adorable bow on her pigtailed head, and, of course, her scarlet shoes. The fabrics that I chose for Harriet's clothes are evocative of dry autumn leaves ready to catch fire. I want her apron strings rigid and standing out like fuses awaiting a match light. Her pinafore and hair bow are constructed of antique lace, already yellow with age and screaming of the nineteenth century, flat-lined with off-white taffeta, a good stiff fabric to give some body. Her apron strings, sleeve flanges, and hair bow will be wired to give them a rigidity and a crispness like the burnt edges of paper. To give the illusion that she is wearing a dress under her flyaway pinafore, I have chosen a plaid linen from which to build sleeves into the pinafore. I used the same plaid linen in a darker wash to build the petticoat for the dress, so it will seem as though she is already darkening from the bottom upward.



Figure 18: Victorian Children



Figure 19: Regency Period Pinafore



Figure 20: Regency Oversized Bow



Figure 21: Victorian Red Leather Boots



Figure 22: Harriet Black and White Sketch



Figure 23: Harriet Rendering

The pussy cats have my favorite application of puppetry and prosthetic costume elements in this show. The tail coat of the cat costume will have two puppet cats sewn into the side backs that attach to the coat also at the shoulder for support. The three tails of the tail coat are all cat tails from each of the different species of cat represented.

I cast my pussy cat as an adult female, but the costume is more that of a gentleman: fall-front breeches, waistcoat, tailcoat with a high collar. See the following image:



Figure 24: Regency Period Lady and Gentleman c. 1800

The concept for this cat monster is that we have three pussy cats: one central cat who wears the costume is a ginger cat, one tabby on her right shoulder, and a black cat on her left. Each feline should express a different emotional response toward Harriet. I have swatched a variety of fake furs with which to cover the cat puppets; the ginger cat costume also requires a wig with cat ears on it and leggings built out of fur. The tails of the coat will be replaced by the puppet tails of the cats. This coat will need to be built with some serious structure to support the

wear and the weight of these two heavy puppets that are likely also constructed out of thermoplastic mesh.



Figure 25: Tabby Cat



Figure 26: Ginger Cat



Figure 27: Black Cat



Figure 28: Pussy Cat Black and White Sketch, "Cat Monster"



Figure 29: Pussy Cats Rendering, "Cat Monster"

The Story of the Bully-Boys involves three pranksters: Edward, Arthur, and William; they go out to harass a man who is walking about and find themselves at the mercy of a giant man seething with rage. This vignette affords me a great deal of opportunities as a designer.

The Story of the Bully-Boys

*As he'd often done before,
My neighbor from next door
One fine summer's day went out
To the shops to walk about;
And as he found it hot, poor fella,
He took with him his green umbrella.*

*When Edward, noisy little wag,
He came out and waved his flag;
And William came in jacket trim
And brought his wooden hoop with him;
And Arthur brought his toys,
And joined the other bully boys.*

*Well tall Agrippa lives close by,
So tall, he almost touches the sky!
He calls out in an angry tone,
To leave my neighbor alone.
But they didn't mind a bit,
What Agrippa said of it.*

*Well tall Agrippa foams with rage,
Just look at him on this very page!
He seizes Arthur, seizes Ned,
He smashes all their tiny heads!*

*Then they don't scream and they don't call,
There are all corpses one and all!
Three little corpses, one, two, three,
They are all dead as can be!*

*Silly little bully boys
They've lost more than their toys.
Because Agrippa they annoyed,
Silly little bully boys.*

I know that Edward is a noisy little wag, so I put a giant ornately painted cow bell around his neck. The sound from this should be excellent; imagine the only milk cow on an old German farm.



Figure 30: Antique Painted Cow Bell

On the bell will be a painting of Shockheaded Peter, whom Edward probably takes for folk legend. Edward also waves his flag; Edward would have a prop flag that is more like a sign made of old wood that reads “Sinister **H**ijinks & **P**ranks,” another nod to **S**hock**H**eaded **P**eter.

William comes in a trim jacket and carries a wooden hoop; the trim jacket is evocative of a gentleman’s costume featured below.



Figure 31: Regency Period Gentleman in “Jacket Trim”

Edward would have a cropped, fitted tail coat with high-waisted, tight-fitting stirrup pants. His wooden hoop could be anything: a torture device, a hula hoop toy, a tire or wagon wheel. It will have to be knotty and have leaves and twigs shooting out from it no matter what shape it takes. Arthur, the poem says, comes with his toys, so I gave him a cricket bat and a bag with a dead something in it.

These bully boys are a group of sinister clowns, no good bullies. They should strike the eye as a group of thugs like MacHeath's gang in *Threepenny Opera*, although they are clearly more Huckleberry Finn. Their faces will be painted with clown make-up, a big black grin on Edward's face and thick, dark eyes.

When tall Agrippa comes and knocks the boys on their heads, I want to somehow enable a quick change out of hats and into headdresses. These headdresses, as detailed above, will be gauzy but stabilized so that they can create a bowl on top of the boys' heads in which to keep our red marbles. Hopefully, they will shine like brains. The gauzy masks will have black electrical tape in the shape of Xs over the eyes and mouths of the boys to reinforce that they cannot see or speak any longer; they are dead. Then, when the boys bend over to collapse, the marbles will spill out of their headdresses and clang noisily onto the raked floor.



Figure 32: Dead Bully Boy Black and White Sketch



Figure 33: Bully Boys Black and White Sketch



Figure 34: Bully Boys Rendering

Tall Agrippa is my giant on platform boots. His hands are large, green throbbing monster hands, green like Shockheaded Peter's tree. They remind me of the Hulk hands that were popular children's toys after the Ang Lee film came out, but mine would need to be made to fit aesthetically into the world of this opera. Agrippa should look like a tree, as well, though not like Shockheaded Peter. Instead, he is a tall tree, growing up and not out. His boots are pictured below and would be customized to have 6" platforms attached. Agrippa's fall-front pants have a carnival flavor to them like something a ringmaster might wear, and they are ultra tall in the rise; I chose the fabric primarily because of the twine running through the weave that gives it a thick stripe. Agrippa's tail coat is also special; it will be constructed out of a medium weight canvas with applied jute circles all across the surface. The idea is to give the feeling of surface texture, of bark. Despite all of this, Agrippa's dominant feature is his height. The excessively long tail coat and high-waisted pants, platform shoes and tall top hat give him the appearance of being extraordinarily tall. I would love to see this costume produced. The hair and make-up would be designed to make Agrippa appear to be an old drunk, an unhappy alcoholic who hates joy and, therefore, children.



Figure 35: ABC Brand Punk Boots



Figure 36: Tall Agrippa Black and White Sketch



Figure 37: Tall Agrippa Rendering

The Story of the Man That Went Out Shooting is one that perplexes me; even now I struggle to find the moral of the story. All of the characters suffer in this poem. The hunter is shot falling down a well, and his wife is shot through her coffee cup. The Hare, however, suffers the most. She accidentally kills her own little baby bunny and then turns the gun on herself. It seems to me, then, that the implications of shooting are perilous. The hunter and his wife die, because they did not earn the mercy of the vengeful Hare. The Hare and her baby die, because she was too wrathful in her vengeance. All things even out, I suppose. However, there are no children present in this tale. One might say that the baby bunny dies a needless death and represents youth in the story, but I argue that this is a morality tale for adult behavior.

The Story of the Man That Went Out Shooting

*This is the man that shoots that shoots the hare;
This is the coat he wears;
With game bag, powder-horn and gun
He's going to have some fun.*

*The hare sits in the leaves and grass,
And laughs to see the green man pass.*

*And as the sun gets very hot,
And he, a heavy gun has got,
He lays down to sleep under a tree,
He goes to sleep, as you can see.*

*The hare sneaks up, hip, hop
And takes the gun and then hops off.*

*The green man wakes and sees the hares' face,
The gun is shoved in his face,
He screams and runs away;
The hare chases him all day,
The hare is trying all that she can,
To shoot the sleepy green-coat man.
Help! Help! Fire the Hare!*

*At last he stumbles at the well,
Arse over tit and in he fell.*

*The hare takes aim, and hark!
Bang! Goes the gun, and hits the mark!*

*The green man's wife was drinking coffee
From her coffee cup;
The hare shot cup and saucer through,
And then the hare shot her too.*

*The hare's own child, the little hare,
Lived by the cottage there;
And as she stood upon her toes,
The hare shot her through the nose.
She died with hose in hand,
And she didn't understand.*

*And then the hare puts the gun to her head—
And Bang! Went the gun, and she too was dead!*

The Hunter's color palette is composed mainly of different shades of green in different fabrics: corduroy coat, plaid wool vest, solid wool knickers. A big color break comes in the form of his brown leather gators, knee high spats that button the outseam. The texture of the leather is like alligator skin. I want my Hunter to look like he is comfortable in the woods, and he has something of a connection to the Shockheaded Peter. His hat, therefore, would have sticks and leaves jutting out from it. His gun is practically useless, a prop elephant gun made of rustic wood. He wears goggles, as well, which is an idea that I borrowed directly from the illustration in the book of poetry. In the book, the Hare takes the Hunter's gun and his eye glasses and wears them throughout the poem, even when she is dead and floating on a cloud above the scene with her baby bunny. In my design, the hunter wears a small pair of goggles on his hat, and when the Hare takes them, she dons a larger pair of goggles that look identical to the Hunter's and wears them on her face. I want it to see as though the Hare is proportionally smaller than the Hunter, especially since she will be wearing a large dead rabbit atop her head.



Figure 38: Fairytale Foresters



Figure 39: Green-Coat Hunter Man Black and White Sketch

My Hare is both an actress wearing a rabbit costume and simply a dead rabbit atop an actress's head. Much like my cat monster, the concept for this puppet came early on in the process. I knew what McGrath might do given the opportunity, and I did it: dead rabbit costume. What I love about this costume is that other than the headdress, the costume itself is solid. She looks maternal. Her color palette is soft and her fabrics are sweet: eyelet petticoat, lace and rabbit fur cuffs and spats, and a lovely soft velvet dress. Without the dead hare, she could be a dulled down children's show mother hare. This show being what it is, the dead hare atop her head is a constant foretelling that everything ends in blood.



Figure 41: Hare Black and White Sketch, “Dead Rabbit Costume”



Figure 42: Hare Rendering, “Dead Rabbit Costume”

The hunter's wife turned out to be one of my favorite paintings of the piece. Her orange velvet dress, shaped with some serious undergarments, is proportionally large in the skirt and should catch light beautifully onstage. The petticoat, apron, fichu, and mop cap are all constructed from an off-white lace flat lined with cotton. The fabrics are simple, but the dress will require structure. I gave her a coffee cup filled with marbles, because she is shot through her coffee cup, poor thing. She also has a number of large wooden utensils resting in her apron. I pictured her early on as an old cook bustling about in a kitchen, an innocent wife who merely cleans and cooks the hares that her husband brings home.



Figure 43: Regency Housemaid



Figure 44: Hunter's Wife Black and White Sketch



Figure 45: Hunter's Wife Rendering

Snip Snip—The Story of Little Suck-a-Thumb is the piece of music that comes to mind when I close my eyes and contemplate this opera. The story perfectly embodies the stigma of the play: sweet young child does something childish and dies brutally at the hands of adults. In this case, Conrad dies at the hands of the Great Tall Tailor who comes to snip off his thumbs with a pair of great long scissors, but I envision a story in which Conrad's mother is the Tailor's lover. In this version, mother sets Conrad up for failure and all but hands him over to the Tailor for execution.

SNIP SNIP—The Story of Little SUCK-A-THUMB

*Conrad's mother said: Conrad dear,
I must go out and leave you here.
But mind now, Conrad, what I say,
Don't suck your thumbs while I'm away,
That great tall tailor, he always comes
For naughty boys who suck their thumbs;
And 'ere they wonder what he's about,
He's got his great long scissors out.*

*Well, Mama had scarcely turned her back,
When the thumbs were in, Alack! Alack!
Snip, snip, the scissors go,
And Conrad cries out: Oh!
Snip, snip, they go so fast,
And Conrad's thumbs are off at last!*

I want my Conrad to look like the sweetest little baby boy child that ever walked this earth. He will have shaggy hair hanging like a mop on his forehead and tiny little gentlemanly boots. His suit is made of dark turquoise silk wool crepe and is essentially a onesie with a button down front and flap and back flap over his posterior. Trimmed in off-white lace, this should look like an oversized baby is walking about sucking his thumb. This sweetness I intend to make it extraordinarily horrifying when sweet Conrad bleeds to death onstage.



Figure 46: Philippe Otto Runge Painting of Children Playing

In order for this story to work visually Conrad has to have his thumbs snipped off by the Great Tall Tailor. In my design, the actor will be outfitted with large prosthetic thumbs painted bright red as though they have been sucked raw, an attractive lure to the tailor. As a safety precaution for the child actor, we would have to ensure that his real thumbs are well out of the way and not hidden up inside of the false thumbs, so that when the tailor does snip them off with his great gardening shears, we do not risk hurting the actor in any way. Hidden inside each of his long sleeves, Conrad will have plastic tubing holding two dozen or so red marbles. When his thumbs are severed, Conrad will release the marbles and let them fall from his sleeve cuffs like so much blood dripping from his sliced-open wrists.



Figure 47: Little Conrad Suck-a-Thumb Black and White Sketch



Figure 48: Little Conrad Suck-a-Thumb Rendering

Conrad's Mother is a proper Regency period lady out for an errand in her promenade costume. I found a farcical comic from the period depicting ladies' bonnets in their excess pictured below.



Figure 49: Regency Ladies and Gentleman



Figure 50: Regency Bonnet Cartoon

What speaks to me most about this comic is that we cannot even see the ladies' faces; they are like personified garments, like puppets with gestures but no humanity. I see the potential for a

huge wagging head, large gestural movements. We will not even be able to see mother's face, and I think that is perfect.

As per my theory that Mother and Tailor are having a sordid love affair, I have given Mother some small details to harken back to her closeness with him. For instance, she looks expensive; her clothes are well made. She also has a thimble on her finger and a tape measure bow on the back of her bonnet. Perhaps this is not subtle, but I hope it is effective. In addition to those details, she, of course, has some wooded elements to remind us of her sinister nature.



Figure 51: Conrad's Mother Black and White Sketch



Figure 52: Conrad's Mother Rendering

The Great Tall Tailor is also the Master of Ceremonies for the show, the character who sings our overture, who makes introductions. I want him to be evocative of the emcee from *Cabaret*, a frightening exaggerated and sexy clown. His clothes must fit impeccably; after all, clothing is his primary trade, infanticide being his other. Some details about his garments that add to this effect are the hand stitching down the outseams and inseams of his soft leather fitted fall-front breeches. He will have sock garters worn on the outside of his pants with tiny pockets and loops for details like thimbles, awls, spools of thread, needles, etc. His fitted tail coat will be of striped brown wool with a soft green velvet lapel. His vest will be black with small off-white paisley, very appropriate for the period. With his wild grey hair and black and white clown make-up, the Tailor should strike a profound impression.

The Great Tall Tailor's scissors are his main prop, and are very important to the story telling. Instead of tailor's sheers, which are already larger and more formidable than dress-maker's sheers, he will have old, gnarly gardening sheers, huge and rusted with big wooden handles. This character is clearly very close to Shockheaded Peter in the layout of good and evil in the play.

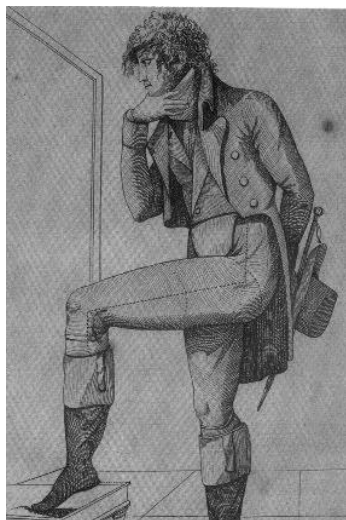


Figure 53: Regency Gentleman



Figure 54: The Great Tall Tailor
Black and White Sketch



Figure 55: The Great Tall Tailor Rendering

The Story of Augustus and the Soup depicts a chubby boy, fat and happy, with plenty to eat. One day he rejects his soup, and, as if by a curse, he grows thinner day by day until he dies of starvation. Why fight it? I want to cast five children to play Augustus starting with a large boy, big and tall, and gradually moving toward a short and thin child, who would be brought out on a stretcher dead on the fifth day of his starvation. With different sized children, we would need multiple copies of the same costume. Each look would be identical to the last, but would have the appearance of getting larger, because our actor is getting smaller. Of course, I could use fit to aid in this effect if my children are not visually different enough to be impactful.

The Story of Augustus and the Soup

*Augustus was a chubby lad;
Great, fat, ruddy cheeks Augustus had.
He always did as he was told
And never let his soup get cold.*

*And everyone saw, they saw with joy
The hale and hearty, healthy boy.
But then one day, one sad fateful day,
He cried out:
Take that nasty soup away!*

*The second day comes, the picture shows,
How weak and thin Augustus grows!
But when the soup is put on the table,
He cries out loud, as he is able:
Take that nasty soup away!*

*The third day comes, of what a sin!
Augustus grows so pale and thin.
But thought he grows so weak and ill,
He cries out, cries out still:
Take that nasty soup away!*

*The fourth day comes, the fourth day comes,
And he scarcely weighs a sugar plum;
He's like a little bit of thread,
And on the fifth day, he was—dead!*

Augustus' costume is based on the uniforms worn by the boys pictured in the daguerreotypes below. I am engaged by the idea that Augustus might be a boy scout or some other kind of troupe member, a spoiled little boy throwing a fit because he has everything that he needs.

The soup that Augustus refuses to eat is another prop element containing forest elements; I call it stick soup. The bowl would be oversized and filled, stuffed to capacity with a bundle of twigs shooting out in all different directions. How could Augustus possibly eat this soup if he wanted to eat it? For irony, too, he would need to be carrying a loaf of bread, something rustic.



Figure 56: Victorian Boys in Uniforms

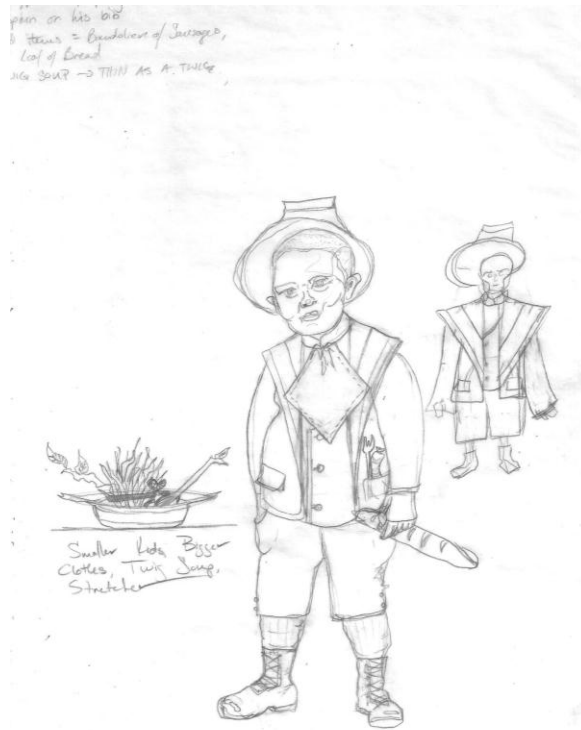


Figure 57: Augustus Black and White Sketch



Figure 58: Augustus Rendering

The Story of Fidgety Phil is about boy who squirms at the dinner table; he dies when his chair collapses backwards and he pulls the table cloth on top of him thereby stabbing himself with utensils. There is a common thread throughout the opera of children's death as it relates to food; see also Augustus who will not eat his soup. Here we have Phil who disrupts dinner with his wriggling and giggling. What is the moral of this tale? Children who do not appreciate their supper do not deserve to live. Something in this story also speaks to formality; Phil is punished also because he could not adhere to the code of conduct at the dinner table.

The Story of Fidgety Phil

*Let's see if Philip can
Be a little gentleman:
Let's see if Philip's able
To sit at the table.
Mama bades Phil behave;
And Papa he looks very grave.
But Fidgety Phil he won't sit still,
He wriggles and he giggles.
Well I declare,
He rocks backward and forwards,
With his chair,
Just like it was a rocking horse;
Mama is getting very cross.
Where is Philip, where is he?
Ah, there he is and he bleeds,
There's a blood-stained table cloth lying on him,
There's knives and forks, they're all stick in him!
There's knife, and there's a fork,
Oh Philip, this is cruel work;
What a terrible to-do—
Philip bleeds to death and turns blue!
Mama and Papa wonder how
They're going to have their dinner now?*

Fidgety Phil looks like a little gentleman, but he is a devious little bastard, smirking sweetly, a spoiled, rotten, evil child. The reasons for his fidgeting are his high and tight collar, high fitted jacket, his fancy spats. Phil is one of those nineteenth century children who existed

before the modern concept of childhood, whose nurse dressed him like a young adult to sup with his parents. His nurse dressed him, because he certainly does not have a close relationship with his parents. His cuffs are long, his collar starched, his hair combed with pomade. This child is squirmy.



Figure 59: Regency Period Gentleman



Figure 60: Young Victorian Boy

Phil's death entails a careful collaboration with the props department, as well. Again, this show would have to be a close collaboration of all elements. Phil's death occurs when the table cloth falls on top of him and he is stabbed through by forks and knives. I have given Phil's parents giant wooden utensils as hand props, and I think it would be fitting to have all of the table settings be raw wood or otherwise speaking of the forest in some way. It is likely, even, that Phil's parents come across the table and stab him with their giant utensils instead of him merely dying by table cloth. The cloth would be white linen and would need to release a deluge

of marbles when it comes off of the table onto Phil and the floor. Perhaps our marbles could spill out of the table, which should be giant and, of course, made of hard wood.

*little gentleman, devious bastard, sweet but evil
Table cloth w/ utensils & food = let's marbles go



Phil

Figure 61: Fidgety Phil Black and White Sketch



Figure 62: Fidgety Phil Rendering

Phil's Parents are members of the adult group in the play that are connected to wooded imagery, nature, leaves, and therefore, Shockheaded Peter, the child killing force. Father has his wooden pipe, and Mother has her wooden fork. As with many of the props in this show, these characters' hand props should be custom-made and proportionally giant. I want the props to support the visual unease throughout.

Phil's parents are like the farmers from American Gothic; even the research image below speaks of the stoicism prevalent in nineteenth century photography.



Figure 63: Early Victorian Couple



Figure 64: Phil's Parents Black and White Sketch



Figure 65: Phil's Parents Rendering

The Story of Johnny Head-in-Air is simple; Johnny walks about everywhere he goes with his head turned upward looking at the sky. Johnny walks into a river and drowns. The fish mourn his death. This tale does not have adults in it, nor does it have much to do with the woods. I think it provides an interesting break in the stage action, and lets the audience hone in on the scenic elements. When Johnny walks into the river, I want him to literally walk off of the down stage right corner of the deck and into the giant wash basin filled with marbles. The basin will have to be huge and positioned in such a way that Johnny could hide in it or made in a way that he could escape from it. I want to cast a small child and let it be really disgusting when he drowns.

The Story of Johnny Head-in-Air

*As he trudg'd along to school
It was always Johnny's rule
To be looking at the sky
And the clouds that floated by;
Just what before him lay,
In his way,
Johnny never thought about;
So that everyone cried out;
Look at little Johnny over there,
Little Johnny-Head-In-Air!*

*Running just in Johnny's way,
Came a little dog one day;
Johnny's eyes were still astray
In the sky, every day.
Down they fell with such a thump,
Dog and Johnny in a lump!*

*Once, with head as high as ever,
Johnny walked beside a river.
He watched the swallows trying
Which was cleverest at flying.
Oh what fun, oh what fun,
Johnny watched the bright round sun!
Coming in and going out,
This was all he thought about.*

*So he strode on, only think!
To the river's very brink,
Where the bank was very steep,
And the water very deep;
And the fishes, in a row,
Stared to see him coming so.*

*One more step, oh, sad to tell!
Headlong in poor Johnny fell.
And the fishes in dismay,
Wagged their tails and ran away.*

*Here lies Johnny on his face,
With his little writing case!
And the fishes, one, two, three,
Came back again, you see;
Up they came the moment after,
To see Johnny in the here-and-after.
Each popped up his little head,
To tease poor Johnny who was – dead!*

Johnny's costume aids in justifying his head's constant tilt upward, because his jabot or neck wrap would be very thick, high, and tight. The more fabric there is, the longer his neck will look, and the higher his chin will appear to be. I also gave Johnny some school books and a belt to wrap them in as the children did in the movie *Hans Christian Anderson* with Danny Kay.



Figure 66: High Collar



Figure 67: Johnny Head-in-Air Black and White Sketch



Figure 68: Johnny Head-in-Air Rendering

The Story of Flying Robert is the last of the opera, and it ends the action on an anti-climactic note. Robert loves to go out during rain storms, and one day he is swept away with his green umbrella. Here we do not have an active death; we do not see Robert fall from the skies or get struck by lightening. His death is something of a mystery; he was never seen again. The moral is clear: do not go out in bad weather; however, this tale as an ending to our junk opera seems a little bland. In my show, Robert's death entails the actor physically flying out FOY style. His little hat could be left onstage, a reminder of his absence. Furthermore, some interesting lighting and sound cues could spice up this final scene. Perhaps the band members could use rain sticks and thunder sheets onstage.

The Story of Flying Robert

*When the rain comes tumbling down
In the country and the town,
All the good little girls and boys
Stay indoors and mind their toys.
Robert says, No! when it pours,
It's better out, out of doors.
Rain it did, and in a minute
Rob, Rob was in it.*

*See the wind, how well it whistles,
Through the flowers and the thistles!
See the silly fella
Underneath his green umbrella,
Up he goes the silly fella;
Up he goes into the skies,
No-one hears his screams and cries,
See how the rude wind bore him,
And it blew his hat before him.*

*He has reached such a height,
He is nearly out of sight,
But where he fell,
No-one yet could tell;
But one think is plain:
He was never seen again!*

Flying Robert's look is basically an overcoat, very like a modern trench coat, made of a multi-colored striped wool. His boots are tall and tight like a pair of Victorian galoshes, and his spats are constructed out of checked burlap.



Figure 69: Regency Period Painting



Figure 70: ABC Brand Boots

Along with the overcoat, Robert's umbrella is the star piece of this ensemble. Hoffmann cites Robert's green umbrella as the means by which he protects himself when he goes out and also as his demise. The umbrella is my obvious choice for a little Shockheaded Peter infusion. The umbrella would have a visible frame like the veins of a bat's wing and be made to look like frail wood. Instead of fabric, the umbrella will be made of leaves loosely woven throughout the framework; it could hardly protect anyone from rain. It is impractical, like going out in a rainstorm.



Figure 71: Flying Robert Black and White Sketch



Figure 72: Flying Robert Rendering

Costumes for The Band had to include the minutia; like seeing a McGrath sculpture, a close attention to detail reveals much more information about the character. If you peel back the layers of the costume, you get a thorough understanding of the creepiness of these musicians. The band is close in the play to Shockheaded Peter, and, therefore, they have some obvious touches of the wooded theme. They would get Peter's scraps: bones, skins, hair, hands, feet, dolls, teddy bears, trinkets. I also just want them to be truly frightening, as unsettling to watch as the music is to hear.

There must be an accordion player, who would also be Martyn Jacques, our composer. Jacques has his own very strong personal aesthetic, and I think his look in the original production was influenced entirely by it. I would never ask Jacques to wear the following costume; his aesthetic speaks more loudly of himself than my dressing him as a forest monster. My accordion player has cloven feet, facial prosthetics, and wild wolfish hair. He and the others should be a mixture of period woodland ghouls and a contemporary zydeco band. His accordion is a junkyard jalopy adorned with a license plate and any number of cow bells, pots, and pans. The license plate has the letters "SHP" front and center to remind us all of his allegiance to the big bad guy. I cannot decide if this is a subtle touch or if I am screaming at the audience. Either way, it is important to me that the opera have some subversive humor, and this seems like an appropriate place for it.



Figure 73: Accordion Player



Figure 74: Accordion Player Black and White



Figure 75: Accordion Player Rendering

My stand-up bass player is a woodland creature, something like the Tumnus the faun from Lewis's Chronicles. He will have gnarly nails, pierced up pointy ears, and a tail, though the end of the tail finds a leaf instead of a tuft of fur. His instrument would have to be constructed in collaboration with the props department or even the music department, as I do not claim to know how to create a sonically functional piece of art. I could always give it a try.



Figure 76: Washtub Bass Player Black and White



Figure 77: Washtub Bass Player



Figure 78: Washtub Bass Player Rendering

The wash-board player was inspired by a zydeco concert I attended on the main stage at the Richmond Folk Festival in 2012, Nathan and the Zydeco Cha-Chas. Nathan's wash-board player was speaking to me! The board secured around his shoulders allowed his movements to be rhythmic and funky. He bopped up and down with every stroke of his spoon against the board. The sound, too, would compliment the score to this junk opera. Again, I am not a maker of musical instruments nor am I anything like a musical director. I do want to outfit my musicians with tools that make them feel like the sinister backbone of the play.



Figure 79: Washboard Player B&W



Figure 80: Washboard Player



Figure 81: Washboard Player Rendering

Design Process: Paper Prep

After the research period, my design process begins often with paper preparation. I work with fifteen by eleven inch medium weight water color paper, which is very amenable to modification. So, when considering the background on which my renderings will sit I always consider changing the paper to fit the mood or theme of the show. For *Shockheaded Peter*, I knew early on that I wanted to evoke the images of Elizabeth McGrath. Her sculptures were mounted in shadow boxes painted or stained to look like old wood. This was my goal. However, a dark background is tricky to achieve successfully. I want above all else to feature the costume renderings and not to exhibit my paper dying skills. However, I cannot deny that paper treatment is an inextricable part of my design process. It prepares me mentally to produce the rest of the world of the play.

To prepare the paper for *Peter*, I began with a few diluted water color washes, a few burnt umbers of varying saturation and some burnt sienna. Starting on clean, dry paper, I dry-brushed some of each wash onto the paper using heavy saturation at the edges and keeping it light near the center, the playing area for my rendering. This technique is not far removed from the scenic artistry technique for wood graining. That is the idea. I wanted the paper to feel like one of McGraths shadow boxes or like I painted directly atop an old plank of wood. Given the opportunity to do it again, I would render this show on old wood boards with acrylic paint. That would be the ultimate art installment version of this show.

After another application or two of dry-brushing and thorough drying, I ran my paper under extremely hot water; boiling water from a tea kettle is preferable. I do this in my kitchen sink or on an exterior surface that I do not mind getting wet and painty. With the hot water hitting close to the center of the paper, I drag a wide paint brush across the surface of the paper

to remove much of the paint. This step brings the lines and the surface of the paper to one level and pushes back the intensity of the paint. Focusing my brush strokes and water application on the center of the paper carves out a nice pale playing area for the rendering. I do not, after all, want my background texture to come through the rendering all that much; a little coming through feels right to me.

The paper then has to dry on a flat, breathable surface for twenty-four hours or until thoroughly dry. It will, by sheer dint of its being water color paper, have curled and bowed around the edges. If this is not desirable, I typically run the paper under a steamy iron and press it down with weights to flatten it before running it through my printer.

Sketching

After paper prep, I turn my full attention to black and white character sketches. All of my black and whites are included in the character analysis section above. Working on one character at a time from my chorus to my principles, I find the exact research for the garments of my character first. Usually, I am responding to the mood of the image or the silhouette appropriate for my character's story. So much depends on the silhouette. Costume design affords me a wonderful power in perception of a show by the audience. Before any lines are spoken, before we know anything of a character's mind, we see how he or she is dressed. So much of the character development is impressed on the audience's mind at this point. A powerful moment for a costume designer is when a character gets entrance applause based solely on his or her costume. It is proof of what I am saying here, that costumes make a huge subliminal impression and go miles in developing a character.

Once settled on the silhouette, I search for an appropriate pose for my figure. Typically, this involved combing the internet searching for things like, "tall, female ballet dancer" or "old male Victorian doctor." There has to be a better way. Often, I am dissatisfied with this method; relying on the internet for poses makes me feel common. If all costume designers do such, then we will all eventually be recycling the same poses over and again. My brilliant figure drawing instructor, Mr. Robert Foster of Virginia Commonwealth University's Communication Arts Department has solved this problem for me. His suggestion is that I treat rendering like illustration, and find my own original resources. Carry a camera, he says, and take shots of people doing what you want them to do. Dress them up, he says; put your costumes on them and photograph the image. This will give you an exact model from which to draw. I am enamored

of this suggestion, though not convinced that it is the most practical for a costume designer.

Needless to say, I now keep my camera handy in all situations and am ready to snap interesting shots when they present themselves to me.

Swatching

After black and white sketches are completed, I move to my swatching. As aforementioned, my swatching process for this show was completely different than any I have done before. Instead of swatching for specific fabrics along the way going sketch by sketch, I compiled all of the fabrics types that I knew I wanted to use in the show and kept only those that worked within my color palette based on Philip Otto Runge's color sphere illustration.

For this opera, I sought to combine as many different layers and textures in each costume as possible. The Regency period is characterized by velvets, laces, leathers, wools, silks and embroidered cotton. Some of my pieces required the addition of elements like fur or gauze. In the end of things, I chose to give everyone lace for their cuffs or jabots, and to build leather or fur spats whenever possible.

Printing and Inking

When swatching is concluded, I move to printing and inking my sketches. With the completed black and white sketches in hand, I scan them into a Photoshop document that is already laid out with title headings and any other important information like character name, sketch number, etc. For *Shockheaded Peter*, I decided on a simple layout. It is enough to have a wooded paper treatment and a detailed design; I did not want to clutter the plate with excessive and needless lettering. Therefore, I used a simple arched lettering for the title and included subtitles for each story beneath it in a smaller font. I printed the lettering, a font called “wood font two,” in green ink. After printing, I ran a small brush charged with water over the lettering and let the green ink bleed down the page slightly; I feel that it gives my title a sense of dirt and blood, eeriness. Finally, I adjust my black and white sketch on the document and print out the sketch, just the silhouette onto my treated paper. This black and white print together with my swatches leaves only one final step.

Paint

Painting is the last and, sometime, the most difficult step for this designer. After each design plate has become so precious, it is difficult to lay a brush down atop the work without some pause. I am not what I would call a painter, though I am not bad at it. I love doing it, really, but I, like so many other artists, have nerves like a silk thread when it comes to one thing or another. I find that painting takes time to warm into, and it is certainly a process that requires space. The painting in this design represent my attempt to back off of the page a bit, to have a lighter hand with my texture and to use less paint than I typically do. Overall, I am pleased with the paint for this design, though I am and always will be growing in this department.

As I review my paintings, I am struck by the heaviness of my paint and the coarseness of my textures. The first few layers of my paint usually consists of water color paints and gouache; as I build layers I incorporate other media like acrylic paint, wax china pen for highlights and charcoal for the darkest shadows. More and more I am mixing my paint palette before I begin. This is another technique passed on to me by Bob Foster.

Business of Design

Depicted above in the body of this examination is the art of costume design. The production bible represents the business end. After all, this field that we are in, this theatre is both art and business. It could not be one without the other. The costume designer's production bible is the key to success. My bible includes detailed write ups of the art of the show: concept statement, scripts, character analysis, research, scenic renderings. However, it also includes vital information for the production of the art into reality: budget, scene breakdown, costume plot, measurements, actor photos, rehearsal reports, etc. Often, I will keep an entirely separate budget bible for a show. This project being an unrealized production did not require an entire bible for things like invoices, receipts, rental agreements and inventories, and vendor contact information. When a design goes into production, these things pile up very quickly, and it is imperative that a designer be able to track all of them. Having worked on the other side of the bible as a costume shop manager, I know how vital it is for a designer to keep good paper work.

This show was designed to be produced at a regional theatre, one with a costume shop who can handle the build requirements, so that all I need to source and budget are supplies. This is opposed to budgeting for outside builds, a changing market and one that requires experience to estimate costs. The budget is a costume designer's bread and butter; it is vitally important. I cannot conceive of a way to design a show without first completing a costume budget. This is probably the most critically important lesson in the business of design that I will take away from my experience with Toni-Leslie James and Neno Russell at VCU. Without a budget, you are dead in the water. Conversely, if you need more money to produce the show that the director wants, you better be able to justify those expenses by producing a budget. Here is what I need to make it happen, line by line, item by item. It is genius.

Conclusion

As a wrap up, I have experienced an idealistic shift of perspective. I identify myself as an artist now, which is something that was so far out of my reach until the graduate school experience forged me through art school fire. I have identified an aesthetic, that highly sought-after artistic epiphany. I have laid together the projects that I have done over the last three years, and I am able to see suddenly and clearly the repeating features in things like my line quality, the way in which I paint, the paper prep, the shadows, and, most importantly, the design features of the costumes that I put together. I know now, for example, that I frequently use suspenders with rolled-up shirt sleeves on a sexy male leads. I know that I utilize masks and specialty crafts. I know that I paint with stark shadows, so most of my renderings look like they are in high, bright, angular lighting.

I know that I prefer a background texture on my watercolor paper to establish a mood for the rendering, and I will utilize almost any technique to get it. The paper preparation is a huge step in my process as well as a defining feature of my personal aesthetic, and I would almost always rather dye paper than start research or sketches. Rather than fight this, I am going to make a concerted effort in my career ahead to incorporate paper preparation into my projects in a way that is time economical, effective, and enhances the design. If the paper's color or texture distract from or confuse the costume rendering, than the project and the play are best served without them.

I have a firm belief that theatre is both business and art; without one the other would not be possible. This ideal is theoretical, but the practical application of it is very present in costume design, as in other aspects of our work. In order to achieve the full potential for a given show at a given theatre, I have to have a thorough comprehension of my circumstances and means. What

kind of budget do I have? What is my costume shop capable of producing and how much work can they realistically handle? What is costume stock like, and can I use it? Should I rent? Can I build and how much? These are the costume designer's questions. The relative success of a costume design depends entirely on a designer's ability to navigate these factors.

Shockheaded Peter was a huge stepping stone in my process of self-recognition and training. This show is my first children's show for one thing, though I often think it is laughable to refer to it as such. Speaking from a design perspective, this show has all of the staples of children's theatre: puppets, music, rhyming poetry, dogs, rabbits, and pussy cats. Of course, the fear factor distinguishes *Shockheaded Peter*; parents do not bring their children to the theatre to see this brand of skewed morality. Even so, this is my first children's genre fairy tale story show; the experience has made a few things clear. When telling stories in this way hyperbole is necessary; take subtleties and blow them up until they become visibly notable attributes. If you can do this, then the characters will wear their idiosyncrasies on the outside; children will be stimulated by the visual story. Puppets come to life.

This play is my strongest conceptually. The concept is solid, and once it was born it sprang to life, translating seamlessly into the finished product. I spent real time with the characters developing their stories and examining how they fit into the concept. In some cases, it was immediately obvious: Shockheaded Peter is a tree, Agrippa is a tree, Conrad's thumbs are cut off by the tailor's large wooden gardening shears, etc. However, those characters that are less immediately obvious like Augustus or Flying Robert still fit within the overarching concept of the play.

I was so enthralled by the development of the show that I could not just design the costumes; I had to give something to the scenic, lights, and sound elements of the show, as well.

My goal moving forward with this show is to render the scenic elements that I have described in the hopes of one day realizing a production.

I want to produce this play. I want to make it come to life, and I know that somewhere down the line, I will have the support to do so. Colleagues of mine, now friends and hopefully future collaborators, have shown interest in the potential of this project. They have shared my enthusiasm for the story, the music, and the aesthetic qualities of my creation, which ignites my impetus to float this project sometime in the future to a company for production.

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Vita

Jacquelyn Theresa Bush was born May 1, 1985 in Shelby County, KY. She lived in Winchester, TN, throughout most of her young life. She received her BA in English and Theatre from Sewanee: the University of the South in 2007, and is working toward her MFA in Costume Design from Virginia Commonwealth University, anticipated 2013. J. Theresa is a costume designer and technician who has worked for companies including The Warehouse Theatre, Greenville, SC; Williamstown Theatre Festival, Williamstown, MA; Stages St. Louis and St. Louis Repertory Theatre, St. Louis, MO; Nashville Ballet Company, Nashville, TN; Lexington Children's Theatre and Actor's Guild of Lexington, Lexington, KY; Centre College, Danville, KY; and Central Piedmont Summer Theatre, Charlotte, NC. J. Theresa also served as Dolly Parton's personal alterationist for Dolly Parton Ent. J. Theresa studied costume design under Toni-Leslie James. She currently resides in Richmond, VA.